

CHAPTER 6

SUPPORT ITEMS

6-1. General. The quality of camping, picnicking, or other recreational experiences is often contingent upon the quality, type, and design of support facilities available. The challenge to the designer and manager is to provide aesthetically harmonious, functional facilities which are durable, vandal resistant, and economical to install and maintain.

6-2. Tables.

a. Picnic Tables.

(1) Many standard designs exist for construction of tables. There are also several commercial sources of well built, economical, prefabricated units and components. The choice of design and construction materials should be based on long-term economy, site-specific functional requirements, durability, comfort, safety, aesthetics, and ease of maintenance or repair. These factors should not inhibit creativity in harmonizing these and related facilities into the overall site setting.

(2) Tables and related facilities should be located on delineated impact areas reinforced to avoid site deterioration. Such impact areas should be located on the passenger door side of camping vehicles. Tables in picnic areas should be level and located in shade or open sites free of roots or stumps, without reinforcement, provided soil compaction will not be a problem. Ideally, tables should be located where afternoon shade is available but, to avoid bird droppings, not directly under trees or branches. They should be sited away from the edge of impact areas, steep slopes, or other obstacles, and 6-10 feet away from a fire ring or grill. At least one table per camping or picnic area should be designed and designated for, and be accessible to, handicapped persons. These sites should be close to restrooms and other support facilities.

(3) Portable tables facilitate off-season storage and provide flexibility in meeting varying site conditions and public use demands. Heavy-duty wooden tables are durable, minimize theft, and allow rearrangement to accommodate user preference. Light-weight tables may have to be secured to prevent theft or large scale displacement. Protruding stakes and chains or similar anchoring methods that may present a safety hazard shall not be used.

(4) Design features of tables should include:

- 6 to 8 foot lengths
- Attached benches

- Rounded or chamfered edges
- No protruding bolts or other safety hazards
- Ease of sitting without climbing over obstructions
- Barrier-free for handicapped
- Rust-resistant metal parts
- Ease of maintenance and repair
- Wooden benches in climates where metal benches tend to be cool and damp or very hot
- All wooden parts shall be splinter resistant and treated with preservative approved for human contact

b. Accessory Features. Depending on local or regional conditions and needs, accessory features may be designed into, or associated with, picnic tables. A wind or sun screen may be desirable in particularly windy or exposed areas. If a covered table is installed, shelves or storage boxes can often be incorporated into the roof support structures to provide added convenience at minimal cost. This is especially helpful at primitive or walk-in camping areas where the user otherwise has little available storage area.

c. Serving Tables. While not an essential component of camping or picnic facilities, park users appreciate a small, portable table for holding camp stoves, serving meals, washing dishes, etc.

6-3. Grills and Fire Rings. Where wood is available, campers often desire a warming fire as well as a cooking source. Combination fire rings and grills should be provided to meet these needs. Fire rings at campsites and primitive camping areas contain campfires and help prevent wildfires. They also tend to prevent proliferation of campfire scars which result when campers are free to build fires in locations of their choosing. At picnic areas, and where wood is not available for warming fires, an upright charcoal grill may be provided. Larger charcoal grills are also desirable for group use.

b. Fire Rings. A fire ring is often the best way to meet demands for a warming/cooking fire where wood is available and fires are not prohibited. These fire rings can be made of metal, fire brick, or natural stone. Steel reinforcing bars should not be used with masonry, as differential expansion will cause cracks. Circular units best fit the shape of a fire and are aesthetically attractive. They can be fabricated in-house or purchased off-the-shelf from various supply sources. A gravel, pumice, or other porous base, with drain tile if necessary, is essential to facilitate drainage of rainwater. Anchor stakes will reduce vandalism. Fire rings should be located a minimum of 10 feet away from a picnic table and overhanging vegetation and, if possible, should be sited downwind of the main living space.

c. Individual Grill. Upright charcoal grills may be provided at campsites where wood is not available, where camp fires are prohibited, at barrier free campsites, and at picnic sites. Depending on local use patterns, grills may be provided at all picnic sites. These grills should have adjustable grate height settings, rotation capability, hinged or removable grate for easy cleaning, and be firmly anchored to prevent theft or relocation.

d. Group Use Grill. One or two large upright grills should be provided at each group picnic shelter or area for large cook-outs. These units should have 1000+ square inches of cooking area and meet the other general specifications as individual grills. One or two standard size individual grills may also be desirable for those occasions when the large grills are not necessary.

6-4. Lantern Holders. Portable lantern holders should be provided at all campsites. Besides providing a needed service, lantern holders help prevent damage to trees from lantern burns when lanterns are hung from nails or wires attached to trees. More than one lantern holder may be desirable, since many campers use more than one lantern for increased illumination. Portable lantern holders allow campers to position light to meet their specific needs. Holders may have single or double lantern hangers. The distance from the ground to the lantern hanger should be approximately 6-1/2 feet.

6-5. Trash Receptacles.

a. Dumpsters. Centralized dumpsters should be utilized where commercial services are available, and when it is cost effective. Siting should take into consideration ease of access by service vehicles, convenience to the park user, and aesthetics. Dumpsters should be located on a nearby level concrete or gravel pad which is well drained. The dumpster site should be screened with natural or planted vegetation, attractive wooden fencing, or other aesthetic screen. Prevailing winds should be considered in locating the site if odors are likely to be a problem. The site should have direct access by service vehicles to minimize time spent and distance traveled within a recreation area. Ample turning and maneuvering space should be planned for the service vehicle.

b. Consolidation of Individual Receptacles. Where use of a centralized dumpster is not practical or cost effective, individual receptacles should be grouped and placed in convenient locations. Separate receptacles should only be used when the above method is unavailable or impractical. Individual receptacles (normally galvanized trash cans) should be secured to prevent overturning or theft. Lids should also be secured to the can or holder. Animal proof covers or holders may be required where such disturbances are a particular problem.

6-6. Benches. Benches should be provided as appropriate at sites such as picnic areas, campgrounds) playgrounds, overlooks, vistas, rest stops along trails, or other sites which would enhance the recreational experience or meet the needs of the user. They can be creatively combined with other park elements in an economical fashion, such as topping a playground barrier with a 2 x 10 board to provide a functional seat on which children can rest and parents can supervise. They can be designed to blend with the surrounding setting, such as using a split log bench on a nature trail. Off-the-shelf units can be purchased, or benches could be made to specifically harmonize with a particular setting. As a general rule, benches should be comfortable, durable) and attractive, and be placed on the proper location and orientation to best achieve their basic purpose. Wooden seats and backs, treated with a preservative approved for human contact, are generally preferable to metal or other materials. Creosote and penta chlorophymel treated woods are not approved for human contact.

6-7. Other Support Facilities. Other facilities may be provided to meet specific needs. As with all park facilities, the design and planning of miscellaneous service facilities should be considered with long-term economy and public safety in mind. Some collateral support facilities, such as sanitary facilities, drinking fountains, telephones, and informational signs, are covered in other chapters of this manual. Other facilities may include, but are not limited to the following:

a. Firewood Bins. Firewood dispensing units may be provided at centralized or scattered locations for storage of wood for sale, or for free use of wood cut in grounds maintenance operations.

b. Aluminum Can Collection Station. Containers may be provided for the public to deposit aluminum cans for recycling by a non-profit group, such as a local scout unit. The organizations may be willing to sponsor such a project by constructing and maintaining the station.